

TOM SWIFTIE POTPOURRI

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I've found a productive way to pass the time when I'm waiting impatiently in a doctor's or dentist's office: I manufacture Tom Swifties. Remember them? They were the word game rage 25 years ago. Maybe it's time for a comeback, she reparteed.

I have classified the Tom Swifties below according to the part of speech used punnily. Perhaps **Word Ways** readers can add to this potpourri (meaning "rotten pot") of Tom Swifties.

Here are a few adverbial Swifties taken from the April 1967 Pendulum, a monthly newspaper I edited in the 1960s:

"I'm looking forward to this ride," said Lady Godiva shiftlessly
"I've given up the project as dead," he said gravely
"Well, I'll be hanged," said Tom duly

It was even possible to generate a dialog:

"My feet hurt," he said flatly
"They do?" she inquired archly
"They do indeed," he answered solely
"Tough," she said callously

Now for some other adverbial Swifties I whipped up recently while making a soufflé:

"I'm angry about all these exams," he said testily
"I'll get lots of money," she said appropriately
"She's not guilty!" the lawyer said defensively
"I can't fix this muffler," he said exhaustedly
"I won't help you," he said effortlessly
"That's poison gas!" he shouted obnoxiously
"He's dead," she said stiffly
"Ow! I cut myself," he said sharply
"This food needs some seasoning," she said blandly
"I'm a complete lefty," he said offhandedly
"I don't pose for photographs," he said candidly
"Cut off the air conditioning," he said fanatically
"I love you, Mom," the boy said sonorously
"I..need..some..water..please," he said periodically
"I'll blow you all up!" the terrorist shouted bombastically
"I can't swim in such muddy water!" he shouted ponderously
"I can so act," the blonde said dramatically
"Put on your brakes!" she shouted skiddishly
"I've never stayed in a motel," she said innocently
"That's the bottom line," he said basely

"This iron is totally corroded," he said rustically
 "Help! I can't move," she said staidly
 "Watch my high-wire act," he said flippantly
 "I'm a priest," he said massively
 "I have a princely bloodline," the vain man said royally

Here are three adjectival Swifties:

"This water bed moves around too much," she sighed, baffled
 "Straighten this place out now!" she hollered, upset
 "I don't look right in this toupée," he said, harried

Verbal Swifties are also possible:

"I'll be switched!" he wailed
 "Why aren't your violin strings attached?" his mother harped
 "Let's get the flames out," said the fireman, alighting
 "I'm not sure I should trim the bush," he hedged
 "I'm not man enough!" he w(h)imperd
 "Get a good grip," he advised
 "Listen, and you'll hear my echo," he resounded
 "The water's all turned on," the plumber piped up
 "You look great with your hair in a beehive," he teased
 "I'll close the window," he said, shuttering
 "Oil made me rich!" she gushed
 "These pills work," the doctor said, capsuling his opinion
 "Ah choose you," the Southern belle sneezed
 "Ach! Did zis voman give me birth?" he müttered
 "I can't write poetry, but I can prosit," he said, celebrating

And what about the prepositional Swiftie?

"This is a good peace agreement," the President said in accord
 "I'll be darned!" she laughed, in stiches
 "I'm guilty!" he shouted with conviction
 "What city is this?" he asked in a state of confusion
 "I love cutting lamb's wool!" the sheepman said with sheer joy
 "I don't harbor a grudge," he said, peering through watery eyes

The Tom Swiftie I like the best? "I did not hit my former wife," he expounded.

Now it's time to fly, she said plainly.